

**DETROIT INTERMODAL FREIGHT TERMINAL PROJECT**  
**Draft Notes**  
**Local Advisory Council Meeting**  
**April 29, 2003**  
**Ferndale Community Center**

**Purpose:** To review the progress of the DIFT particularly to discuss the draft Purpose and Need document.

**Attendance:** See attached.

**Discussion:**

**Introductions**

Mohammed Alghurabi opened the meeting by asking for individuals to introduce themselves. He then indicated that procedures for the meeting would allow the Local Advisory Council members to make comments/ask questions. Following the Council's discussion, a period would be available for the public to participate.

Mohammed Alghurabi then inquired if there were any comments or questions related to the notes of the March 27<sup>th</sup> LAC meeting. Kathryn Savoie indicated that on page 6, the notes indicated she said that particulate matter should not be included in the EIS document. The word "not" should be removed. Mohammed indicated that the correction would be made.

**Purpose and Need**

Joe Corradino provided an overview of the Purpose and Need document. He used graphics to discuss the following.

- ✍✍DIFT Project purpose;
- ✍✍DIFT Project goals;
- ✍✍Current and future intermodal terminal locations;
- ✍✍Lift demand (2002) at existing intermodal terminals;
- ✍✍Forecast demand (2025) at four intermodal terminals;
- ✍✍Need based on capacity versus demand and connectivity;
- ✍✍Modifications in truck trip forecasts; and,
- ✍✍What is scoping?

Following the presentation, Kathryn Savoie asked for clarification on the number of truck trips per “lift” in the intermodal terminal. Joe Corradino indicated that the ratio would be more like 1.5 to 2 trucks trips per lift as compared to 3 used in the past. Kathryn Savoie asked why the number would change. Joe Corradino indicated that during the scoping process last fall, it was asked that an inventory be conducted of the current activities at the intermodal terminals. In response, truck trip counts had been conducted at each of the terminals and correlated to the demand (i.e. lifts) provided by the railroads. The result is that the relationship of truck trips to lift demand was in the neighborhood of 1.5 to 2. Joe Corradino also indicated that a survey of North American (U.S. and Canada) intermodal terminals indicated that the truck-trips-to-lift ratio was in the same range. Karen Kavanaugh asked that the truck count information be provided to the LAC. It was indicated that the data would be forwarded.

Karen Kavanaugh asked if the forecasts of demand were related to either the improve/expand alternative or the consolidation option. Joe Corradino indicated that the forecasts of demand in the Purpose and Need document (Table 2) were for the “No Action” scenario. Karen Kavanaugh asked when forecasts would be available for the other two options. Joe Corradino noted that a commodity-flow model was being developed to assist in providing those data and the results are likely to be available, on a preliminary basis, within the next 60 days. Nevertheless, preliminary forecasts were included in the draft Purpose and Need document.

Olga Savic asked if the data used to date reflect periods of economic downturn. Joe Corradino indicated that demand at the lower level on Table 2 (600,000 lifts per year) is based upon a source known as Reebie. That information does consider the economic developments of the past in predicting the future. Furthermore, he indicated that a commodity-flow model is being developed based upon Reebie data and, therefore, would reflect such economic trends.

Mohammed Alghurabi asked Joe Corradino to briefly explain the link between the Reebie-based commodity-flow model and the REMI economic model. Joe Corradino indicated that both models deal with forecasts of employment and, therefore, they are being integrated so that they reflect the same type of job activity in the future.

David Vanderveen stated that in familiarizing himself with the DIFT Project, he noticed earlier work had focused on only one alternative to the No Action scenario, i.e., the consolidation option. Now, he noted that an additional alternative to improve/expand four existing terminals

was being considered. He asked if one were preferred. Joe Corradino responded that there was not a preferred alternative at this time. Both the improve/expand and consolidate alternatives were being examined in the NEPA process to allow such a determination to be made. He stressed that the preferred alternative would be the one that best satisfied the project's purpose and need.

Kathryn Savoie asked why the new alternative had been added. Joe Corradino indicated that the scoping process in the latter part of 2002 had surfaced the need to reexamine the improve/expand alternative. While that concept had been studied in the past, the Federal Highway Administration had come to the conclusion that the earlier work lacked conformity with the National Environmental Policy Act. Therefore, both the improve/expand and consolidate alternatives would be examined for the same range of issues and their ability to meet the purpose and need.

Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that, while comments were being requested at the meeting, the Local Advisory Council was invited to review the document and provide input on or before the end of the business day on May 9<sup>th</sup>. Furthermore, it was stressed that the DIFT Project Team would accommodate any request for a meeting to discuss the document.

Kathryn Savoie asked why would the number of truck trips per lift be changed between the Feasibility Study and the EIS. Joe Corradino indicated that the earlier work on the DIFT was to test the feasibility of the project. In that work, a larger ratio of truck-trips-per-lift was better because it would define the maximum impact in terms of issues such as noise and air quality. By the same token, because the project was now in the EIS phase, and consistent with requests made by the local community, underlying assumptions were being refined. As a result, the lift forecasts, as well as the relationship of truck trips per lift, were being modified.

Kathryn Savoie asked how MDOT, after studying the DIFT Project for ten years, had never used national defense as a need for the project? Joe Corradino indicated that it was suggested by the Project Team that this was a legitimate purpose in light of the trend of the military to depend on intermodal since the 1991 Gulf War. The concept was then reviewed by both state and federal participants in the Project Team and approved for inclusion in the draft Purpose and Need document. Kathryn Savoie asked how does the project then address the military need. Joe

Corradino indicated that capacity and connectivity issues to be addressed by the project for business and industry would likewise apply to the military as it depends on business and industry, including the railroads, to meet its needs, particularly during times of conflict.

Steve Tobocman asked if the Department of Defense had been contacted about the project. Joe Corradino indicated that DoD had not been contacted.

Karen Kavanaugh asked if a Canadian railroad would be involved in addressing America's national defense. Gloria Combs responded yes. She indicated that Canadian National does move military products. She also noted that Canadian national services the Selfridge military base as well as other military facilities in the country. She then referred to Chuck Tucker, the Public Works Director of Ferndale and a former employee of Canadian National. Chuck indicated that the railroad terminal handled military vehicles.

Gloria Combs went on to explain that while CN has a relationship with the Canadian government, it is not considered a "Canadian railroad." Seventy percent of the stock in CN is owned by U.S. shareholders. It is a multinational railroad with operations in 14 American states. She indicated that Canadian National moves more auto products than any other railroad company and generates more revenue in Michigan than any other railroad. Furthermore, Canadian National is the largest railroad in Michigan.

Olga Savic asked if there were any significant military use of the CN intermodal terminal during the most recent Iraqi war. Gloria Combs indicated she did not believe that it was significant.

Joe Corradino then turned to the issue of railroad connections outside of the terminals. He stressed that the connectivity issue dealt with these connections as well as highway-related issues. He indicated that a number of problems in the southwest Detroit area at Delray, West Detroit and Milwaukee Junction create what he considers a Gordian Knot to efficient operations of the railroads. Karen Kavanaugh asked for information on this issue, particularly in terms of the amount of time that a train may be blocked and the number of trains per day that are affected. Joe Corradino indicated that information would be provided to the LAC.

Karen Kavanaugh asked for further explanation on the number of truck moves per intermodal lift. She indicated that she could not understand how an intermodal terminal could get fewer than one truck per lift. Joe Corradino indicated that the number was not lower than one truck-per-lift. He indicated, based on recent counts at the Greater Detroit area intermodal terminals, and a survey of terminals in North America, that the number was more like 1.5 to 2 trucks per lift.

Olga Savic asked how will the project end up if the EIS concluded improving/expanding existing terminals is the preferred alternative, but the railroads prefer consolidation. Joe Corradino explained that government's basic decision will be to recommend the project that best meets the purpose and need. Only if that alternative has an unacceptable impact(s) would a lesser alternative be chosen in terms of meeting the purpose and need. He further explained that the recommended alternative must be accompanied by a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) executed by each railroad supporting the development of intermodal transportation in the region. The MOA is required by FHWA. If that memorandum could not be achieved, the alternative would not be able to best meet the purpose and need of the project.

Steve Tobocman asked about the government's involvement, particularly in the funding issue dealing with the recommended alternative. Joe Corradino stressed that the EIS is not based upon a cost-benefit analysis but on the evaluation of the ability of the project to meet the purpose and need and to address its impacts by avoiding or mitigating those that are negative. However, for the project to go beyond the DEIS, it must be demonstrated, to the satisfaction of FHWA and SEMCOG, that funds are available to implement it.

Don Cameron indicated that the goal through the EIS process is to define all the elements of a project, including the Memoranda of Agreement and funding, so that decisions can be made. He reminded everyone that the project is at its beginning so a number of items upon which to make decisions are not yet available. Carmine Palombo indicated that SEMCOG would not place a proposed project on its regional plan without it being cost-feasible. And, it was noted that a project is not approved unless it is on the Regional Transportation Plan.

Steve Tobocman then asked for a timeline for decisions on the DIFT Project. Joe Corradino indicated that a final EIS and a recommended alternative were about 20 months away. Gale

Govaee asked who will make the decision. Joe Corradino indicated that MDOT will make a recommendation to the Federal Highway Administration, and the recommendation must be approved by U.S. DOT in a document called a Record of Decision.

### **Local Economic Area**

Joe Corradino referred to several graphics showing the local areas around each of the existing terminals for which economic impacts will be measured. He asked for LAC input so these areas can be finalized for inclusion in the EIS analysis.

### **Other**

Kathryn Savoie indicated that she had requested at an earlier meeting the number of additional residential and business properties that would be affected by the most recent version of the consolidated terminal layout. Joe Corradino indicated that those data have not been finalized but stated, on a very preliminary basis, approximately one dozen residential parcels (not structures) and 20 business parcels (not businesses) may be involved. Joe then noted that those numbers are very preliminary. He requested that Kathryn not use the numbers yet in any way, including in a news release.

Karen Kavanaugh indicated that a couple of meetings ago that she asked CSX for a map of its existing rail facilities and had not received it. Joe Corradino indicated that was a matter for CSX to address with Karen. Steve Tobocman indicated that he would help Karen obtain the information.

### **Public Comment**

Josephine Powell asked how the purpose and need had been modified to include national defense since it was originally produced in September. Mohammed Alghurabi indicated that national defense is a function of connectivity among modes and that intermodal transportation plays a key role in military operations, particularly during periods of conflict. Joe Corradino indicated that the process used in updating the purpose and need was: a) project team members from MDOT suggested including the national defense issue; b) he drafted the document to include the suggestion; and, c) it was then reviewed, discussed and approved for inclusion by a team of state and federal participants involved in the DIFT Project.

Josephine Powell asked about the involvement of the Department of Defense. Joe Corradino indicated that that U.S. DoD would be involved in the scoping process but that, he believed, the author of the EIS document is the Federal Highway Administration.

Betty Laframboise, a Ferndale resident, asked about the footprint of the proposed expansion of the CN/Moterm terminal. Joe Corradino indicated that the expanded footprint had not yet been defined. He noted, however, that it was likely that the two options of expansion, to the east and to the south onto State Fairgrounds property, had more potential than expansion to the west where residential properties predominated.

Greg Powell noted that there are a number of choke points in the national railroad system. He asked where the money comes from to fix such choke points and referenced the federal transportation bill known as TEA-21. Joe Corradino indicated that funding in TEA-21 is directed largely at highways and public transit; very little railroad money flows through TEA-21.

Martha Gruelle indicated that the scoping meeting should not be held until the Ferndale and Grandmont communities are adequately informed about the footprint for intermodal terminal expansion. Joe Corradino responded by saying that the layout of an alternative is not necessary, and usually not included, in a purpose and need/scoping discussion, as scoping is a very early step in the process.

Martha Gruelle indicated that Josephine Powell should be a member of the Local Advisory Council. Joe Corradino noted that each elected member of government in the affected area was requested to assign somebody to the LAC. Wayne County had assigned Victoria Inniss. He noted at the March 27<sup>th</sup> LAC meeting that Josephine Powell had indicated she would provide a letter from county government indicating she should be an additional LAC member. No letter has yet been received.

Mickey Blashfield indicated that the data on Table 2 of the purpose and need reflects that a lease held by the company with which he works will expire in 2005. He noted that the correct lease expiration date is June 30, 2003. He further indicated that the No Action scenario depicted on Table 2 reflected a drastic situation. He believed that the railroads would not allow that

condition to occur and would make investments on their own to meet intermodal demand in the Greater Detroit area.

Joe Corradino disagreed. In the past, limited investment had been made in the Greater Detroit area by the railroads at their existing intermodal facilities. He also noted that the only new intermodal facility that had been established in recent years was at the MC Depot. It had been developed with a large amount of government investment. Even the current improvement of the Livernois-Junction Yard was not being done by the railroads on their own but with a 50 percent investment by state government. He indicated that if the future demand exceeded capacity, the railroads would likely shift their intermodal growth to other locations outside the region if no state/federal funding were available.

Mickey Blashfield then indicated that he believed that the data shown on Table 2 of the Purpose and Need document was manipulated or massaged. Joe Corradino disagreed.

Karen Kavanaugh asked when scoping would be conducted. Joe Corradino indicated that a tentative day is June 4<sup>th</sup>. Karen Kavanaugh indicated that the current process of handling scoping seems different from the process conducted last September when the alternative for the consolidation in southwest Detroit had much more specific information than the improve/expand option now does. Joe Corradino noted again that it is unusual for a scoping document to contain as much detail about any one alternative as the DIFT scoping document from last September did. Don Cameron confirmed this, indicating that this is the beginning of the process. Don noted those details would be available as the EIS process unfolds.

Kathryn Savoie asked if the June 4<sup>th</sup> meeting were to be an evening meeting. Joe Corradino indicated that since scoping is a meeting designed for government agencies and not the public, it likely would be a morning meeting followed by a tour of the intermodal facilities.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held either on May 27<sup>th</sup> or May 29<sup>th</sup> at a location to be decided.



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**April 29, 2003**  
**Ferndale Community Center**

**Attendance**

Name	Representing	Phone
Ari Adler	The Corradino Group	313-964-1926
Mohammed Alghurabi	MDOT	517-373-7674
Micki Blashfield	CENTRA Trucking	586-939-7000
Karen Cairo	Representative Sander Levin	586-498-7122
Don Cameron	FHWA	517-702-1826
Gloria R. Combs	CN Railroad	248-740-6574
Marty Connour	MARS Industries	313-841-1800
Joe Corradino	The Corradino Group	313-964-1926
Michelle DeSouza	State Sen. Samuel "Buzz" Thomas	313-871-2400
Jeff Edwards	MDOT Metro Region	248-483-5114
Gale Govaeve	Senator Carl Levin	313-226-6020
Martha Gruelle	CBRA/SDEV	313-842-1961
Cheryl Guyer	Senator Gilda Jacobs	248-398-6565
Jim Hartman	The Corradino Group	313-964-1926
Bethany Holland	Ferndale Resident/Business Owner	248-398-1808
Bob Hunt	Wayne County Jobs Economic Dev.	313-224-5824
Tim Jenkins	MI Dept. of Agriculture	313-369-8231
Karen Kavanaugh	SDBA/CBRA	313-842-0986
Betty Laframboise	Ferndale Resident	248-545-4985
Stephanie Litaker	MDOT/Communications	517-373-1036
John & Elenor Meiske	Ferndale Residents	248-543-3256
Carmine Palombo	SEMCOG	313-961-4261
Sherry Piacenti	MDOT Real Estate	517-373-4152
Greg Powell	Brotherhood Locomotive Engineers	248-681-4435
Josephine Powell	Wayne County Environmental	313-224-2658
Harvey Santana	The Corradino Group	313-964-1926
Olga Savic	Rep. Steve Tobocman	517-373-0823
Kathryn Savoie	ACCESS/CBRA	313-216-2225
Captain Roger Schmidt	Ferndale Fire Department	248-546-2510
Steve Tobocman	State Representative	517-373-0823
Kim Trent	Senator Debbie Stabenow	313-961-7388
Chuck Tucker	City of Ferndale	248-546-2514
David Vanderveen	Oakland County	248-858-0516

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